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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 ABUJA 001398

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SUBJECT: NIGERIA: KEY POINTS FROM GENERAL WARD'S VISIT -
DARFUR, AFRICOM

REF: REFS: (A) SILSKI-PFLAUMER JULY 16 EMAIL (B)
STATE 70257 (C) ABUJA 1347 (D) ABUJA 1356

Classified By: Ambassador Robin R. Sanders for reasons 1.4. (b & d).

¶1. (C) The Ambassador and visiting Africa Commander General Ward had a private meeting on July 23 with Nigerian Foreign Minister Ojo Maduekwe (FonMin) at his home on the margins of the 2008 AFRICA Endeavor exercise. The FonMin had returned late on the evening of July 22 from a recently convened meeting in Addis Ababa of the African Union (AU) Peace and Security (PS) committee (which Nigeria chairs) on the indictment of Sudan's leader by the International Criminal Court (ICC). General Ward also met on July 22 with the Government of Nigeria's (GON) Minister of Defense and Chief of Defense Staff, and on July 23 with the ECOWAS leadership. The General also noted during his visit with interlocutors that he prefers to use the term Africa Command vice AFRICOM. Below follows a summary of the FonMin session, and the GON courtesy meetings with the military, civilian and flag officer leadership.

¶2. (C) During the July 23 breakfast meeting with Nigerian Foreign Minister Ojo Maduekwe, the main points covered were:

-- Sudan/Bashir/ICC: The FonMin said that the special session of the African Union (AU) Peace and Security (PS) committee on July 21-22 proved quite difficult as members were tough on Sudan's Justice Minister, who represented Sudanese President Bashir at the session. Maduekwe said he noted to the Sudanese Justice Minister that "sovereignty was not an excuse for not protecting the lives of the Sudanese population in Darfur." He commented that in the future -- once the 12 month deferment allowed by the Treaty of Rome passes -- he thought the PS would recommend stronger action against Sudan and Bashir if things had not improved. It would be hard for AU members, like Nigeria, not to publicly support the ICC decision after that he added. Maduekwe highlighted that in addition to Nigeria's strong position, many others on the PS voiced the same sentiment, although he did not elaborate on which members.

-- Niger Delta demarche: On points provided to the FonMin on the Ambassador's July 11 and subsequent July 14 demarche to President Yar'Adua on Delta issues regarding what the USG had offered to date to the GON as well as other possible reimbursable opportunities, Maduekwe said he had requested an inter-ministerial session (Defense, NSA, etc.) to discuss these options. Ambassador also noted to the FonMin that

during General Ward's visit she had also verbally provided the demarche points to the Minister of Defense and the Chief of Defense on July 22. The Ambassador noted she looked forward to hearing what came out of the inter-ministerial session, and added that once any sort of official GON response is received many of the things in the demarche can require a long lead time (ref a). On UN Special Envoy Gambari, Maduekwe remarked that he had a good meeting with Yar'Adua in London, and that the former will likely still try to assist behind the scenes on Niger Delta issues.

-- AFRICOM: FonMin continued his positive position on the Africa Command and said that Nigeria agreed with the U.S. on the benefits the Command can bring to Nigeria-U.S. military cooperation. He highlighted again the need to: better educate the Nigerian public and others in his government on the role of the Command; continue high level efforts on the USG side to dispel the perceptions in the Nigerian context that AFRICOM was an effort to militarize Africa in general and Nigeria in particular; and work as partners in an effort to address these issues. For his part, General Ward covered the reasons, background and partnership goals of AFRICOM, and highlighted the interagency aspects of the Command as well as the ability he has, as a Combatant Commander, to ensure that Africa not only has more visibility but also that African issues are addressed more effectively in the U.S. military resource, training, and programmatic context.

13. (C) In the other military meetings not related to the Africa Endeavor exercise, General Ward and his team met on July 22 with the Minister of Defense and his senior staff,

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and the Chief of Defense Staff and representatives of the Service Chiefs; and, later on July 23 with the ECOWAS Vice President as well as the Head of ECOWAS Operations and their teams. In all these meetings, General Ward covered the points noted above in the FonMin meetings on AFRICOM. He underscored our efforts to help and assist Nigeria as friends, encouraging more partnership in areas such as naval/maritime issues, training, capacity building, and professionalism. The Nigerian civilian and military leaders all lauded the goals and purpose of the Africa Command, but that public diplomacy with other elements of the GON, press and public still needed to be done to educate them to better appreciate the role of AFRICOM. Of note, the Minister of Defense agreed to work with us to try to help build better awareness, purpose, and appreciation for the role of the Africa Command, while the Chief of Defense Staff -- although more than fully onboard with the enhanced cooperation AFRICOM brings to U.S.-Nigerian military relations -- noted that the responsibility to address the public relations issues on AFRICOM rest primarily on our shoulders.

14. (C) The representatives of the Service Chiefs briefed on several cooperation issues they wished addressed, mostly ranging from large platform equipment needs for the navy and air force, and a larger leadership role in strategic planning for the African Partnership Station (APS). In addition, Rear Admiral OS Ibrahim, Chief of Navy Operations and Training, showed a fair amount of sensitivity to the "lack of appreciation" in his view of "Nigeria's significant naval prowess," noting that given the country's leadership role in the sub-region it should be more involved in strategic planning for APS, including having a staff position on board.

(Note: The GON has been consistently either late/missing deadlines for slot determinations or never responding to APS invitations. We will see if this dialogue improves their record to increase participation and be more responsive. We are very engaged in the process of encouraging them to do more on APS through the TDY naval liaison officer at post and have followed up on key APS issues and opportunities since the July 22 meetings. In addition, their navy is less capable than their egos would allow them to admit.)

15. (C) As a follow-up to all meetings, letters were sent to

the Minister of Defense and the Chief of Defense Staff on where our cooperation efforts are as well as responses (such as choosing a freight-forwarding agent for requested U.S. military and Somalia-bound equipment) that remain pending from the GON side. The Ambassador took the opportunity at meetings with the Nigerian military and civilian leadership noted above to cover demarche points noted in ref b on what the U.S. could possibly assist with regarding the Niger Delta. General Ward noted that meetings with ECOWAS leadership and operational experts were also fruitful and productive.

16. (U) General Ward departed prior to the drafting of this summary report.
SANDERS